

BOMBAY—AN ISLAND CITY

NATIONAL BOARD  
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
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## BOMBAY—AN ISLAND CITY

**B**EAUTIFUL Bombay is located on an island of the Indian ocean from which the hilly mainland is visible in the distance. It is the port through which Europeans usually enter India. It is a city of light and color, of class and creed, of wealth and poverty. It is built of brick and stone. The bazaar or Indian business section of the city is densely populated. Here the native dealer may be seen sitting on his cushion and attending to his customers without rising. The vehicles in the street are motors, gharis drawn by horses, bullock and goat carts. A considerable portion of the business people are Parsees. They came to India twelve centuries ago, and more than any other race of India have adopted Western ideals and customs. Their women are especially emancipated from the binding systems of religion prevailing in India. The Hindus and Mohammedans are more enlightened than their fellow religionists in country districts.

The English population has for its recreation clubs, yachting, golf, tennis and music.

The English formerly inhabited the higher portion of the island, but it is now being occupied by well-to-do Indians, who have learned that health and life depend upon proper housing conditions. They have separated themselves from the crowded Indian section of Bombay, which is often swept by disease and pestilence.

## SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CLASSES

The social division of races in India is not confined to the Indian population. People from the West have distinct social classes according to the rank of the

husband or father in the army, in government service, or in other occupations. The wife and daughter of a manufacturer, of a bank director and of a shop-keeper move in different social circles. In addition to these definite and socially adjusted groups, women of Anglo-Indian birth form another class, whose social and industrial needs are recognized by government and by society.

Unlike the United States, where a man's faith is usually not visible in any peculiarity of dress, action or speech, it is possible in India to clearly define the social rank and religious faith of practically every man or woman in the passing throng. Moham-medans and Parsees have their special head-dress. Hindu men and women have painted caste marks upon their forehead. Religious devotees are often marked by the absence of conventional clothing. The British rulers by their uniform and insignia make possible a general classification, while the liveried servant who drives his mistress' carriage, or stands waiting her commands, is indicative of his mistress' social standing.



A BULLOCK CART.

## ACTIVITIES

The Association has a membership of 775, with a net increase during 1913 of eighty-seven members. The secretarial staff numbers four, of whom two are from the United States.

Bombay owns its own building in which are found the Central Branch (or Institute) occupying the first floor of the building; the second floor is used as a hostel for missionary and other guests, while the two upper floors are given to the occupancy of self-supporting girls—charges for lodging varying according to the income of the young woman, (from \$4.80 to \$9.60 per month).

## GOVERNMENT AID

It is characteristic of the British government, which holds itself neutral on religious matters in India, to grant aid to educational work and enterprises which show themselves practical in the development of the people.

The government has established for the Bombay Association fifteen “apprenticeships,” *i. e.*, scholarships, for young women students who are learning to be stenographers. The services of stenographers are much in demand and of the forty who were enrolled in the commercial classes last year, twenty-one secured “posts” (positions), at a beginning salary of \$19.20 per month. Moreover, the government gave a “grant” (contribution) to the maintenance of the commercial classes. The aid of the government includes also the visits and advice of the “inspectress of schools.” The young women in the classes are required to pass government examinations in order to secure their certificates.



CLASS IN COMMERCIAL BRANCHES



## EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

In addition to these commercial branches the Bombay Association has classes in English and Hindustani, in the making of "sweets" (candies), in physical exercises and in literature. "Monsoon classes" are also listed in the recent annual report. These classes are short-term studies, which are held during the time of the monsoon, the periodic wind that brings heavy continuous rainfall.

## THE INSTITUTE

At headquarters (called the Central Institute) activity prevails. Thirty-three socials with an attendance of seventeen hundred and seventy young women have been held the past year; four hundred and fifty paying guests have been entertained. Ten lectures and conferences have been held. An employment bureau has had the welfare of the three hundred and fourteen women under advisement; in some cases it has meant the securing of passage to England either as nurse or as companion to some traveler. When request has been made, boats and trams have been met by the secretaries. The Institute is also the center of club life, the young women of the twelve clubs devoting themselves to various activities. One group made one hundred and twenty garments to give to charitable institutions. The social service club is making a study of civic conditions. Business girls meet for outings and recreation. Girl Guides (analogous to Camp Fire girls), include young women between the ages of fourteen and eighteen.

A group of young girls from six to ten form the group that in years to come will be the most enthusiastic leaders in Association activities. The weekly

Bible classes number twelve with a total enrollment of two hundred and ninety-seven. During the year three hundred and fifty-six gospel services have been held with an average attendance of forty; this makes an audience of fourteen thousand, two hundred and forty women.

## INDUSTRY

A unique form of industrial work is carried on in Bombay. Four Bible women (that is women, usually of limited education, trained to teach the Bible) visit among the thousands of low caste women employed in the cotton mills of Bombay. The shortest day in these mills is twelve hours in length and the day is spent in hot steam-dampened rooms. The majority of women work from sunrise to sunset, a day of fourteen hours or more under the tropic sun. During the past year these Bible women gave the message of God to eight thousand, six hundred and fifteen women in seven mills. They also made calls to the number of five hundred and ninety on the women in their primitive abodes.

## SUMMER HOME

Bombay has a charming hill station, *i. e.*, summer cottage, about four hours distant by rail from the city. The home is kept open nine months of the year. It is not self-supporting, the members paying about thirty-three cents a day for entertainment. A higher charge is made to missionary and other guests, which helps in its maintenance. Near this home the Girl Guides have their camp in the woods.

In the summer home a "camp," that is a conference, was held during the holidays for school girls. In the work with the school girls and Girl Guides



there is an effort to teach the dignity of labor—Oriental training makes labor with the hands a thing to be despised.

## SCATTERED BRANCHES

The city of Bombay is of such extent that all the work cannot be conducted in the Central Institute. Nine branches are scattered about the area of the city, their primary object being for Bible study and daily readings, which are provided by the British foreign department. Some of these are conducted in the Indian vernacular. Beside the Bible classes there are several Dorcas societies, and classes in First Aid and nursing.

## WORK AMONG STUDENTS

The student work in Bombay is carried on by the University Missionary Settlement. This settlement is supported by the British College Christian Union, the organization in the British colleges analogous to the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations. Its work is among Parsee young women who are generally educated. The matron of the Student Hostel is a Parsee. Four British workers give their time to this work.

The settlement conducts clubs among students in seven schools and colleges. It has also a central club whose matron is a Parsee young woman, who has accepted Christianity and whose influence is very great among the student women of the city.



PARSEE STUDENTS

## STEPS FORWARD

At the annual meeting in January, 1914, Lady Willingdon, wife of the Governor of Bombay Presidency, was presiding officer. The fact that during the year 1913 young women were refused admittance to the hostel, and that the waiting list is already long, that the accommodation for visiting guests is not sufficient, was made very prominent in the meeting and the first steps were taken toward a campaign for securing funds for an additional building. The present building is suffering deterioration in its construction owing to tropical climatic conditions and must be extensively rebuilt.

The secretarial force during 1913 was reduced by the resignation of two of its number. There is now need in Bombay for a teacher of Domestic Science.

The study of civic conditions which has been so well accomplished by the Calcutta Graduates' Union for its own city suggests that a like study will be a feature of this year's work in Bombay.

The movement for Girl Guides is increasing in popularity, and the use of the summer home becomes increasingly more possible.

The more liberal policy of the government to women's education led by Indian members of the government argues an increase in educational work.

Every step in the progress of Indian womanhood places fresh responsibility and increased privilege upon the Bombay Association.

John F. Goucher



JUNIORS—THE FUTURE HOPE OF INDIA